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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KUWAIT 002624

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ARPI; LONDON FOR GOLDRICH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2015

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SUBJECT: SECURITY BUREAU HEAD ON COUNTERTERRORISM, IRAQ,  
IRANIAN VISITORS, GCC FRICTION, FTA, AND AID FOR AFRICA

REF: A. KUWAIT 2607

- [B](#). STATE 108008
- [C](#). KUWAIT 2551
- [D](#). KUWAIT 254
- [E](#). KUWAIT 2547
- [F](#). KUWAIT 2486

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary: During a June 12 meeting with the Ambassador, National Security Bureau (NSB) President Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled said the GOK remained committed to fighting terror and was taking all appropriate steps to arrest and prosecute those who practice or advocate violence. He reported that an inter-ministry committee had prepared a three-year plan on addressing extremist ideologies in Kuwait, and when the NSB had finished its review, he would share main elements of the plan with the Embassy. The Ambassador stressed that CT efforts required sustained action and offered U.S. support. On Iraq, Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled reiterated GOK support for the June 22 conference in Brussels and said the GOK was working on the transfer of Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) assets and ready to discuss debt relief with the Iraqis under Paris Club guidelines. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled briefed the Ambassador on the recent visit of Iranian official Hassan Rouhani and said the GOI had stated its willingness to resolve the continental shelf demarcation issue and restated its intent to develop its nuclear capabilities for civilian uses only. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled also predicted that Rafsanjani would win the presidential election and though this could be good for the region. Commenting on other regional developments, the Shaykh said Kuwait had raised the issue of GCC frictions at the last meeting of GCC leaders and was therefore asked to work on easing tensions between Saudi Arabia and other member states. The Prime Minister's June 11 visit to Riyadh was an attempt to earn Saudi support for small, strategic projects like the Qatar-Kuwait gas pipeline and the bridge between the UAE and Qatar. The Ambassador praised the June 4 seminar on free trade agreements and said the process, while complex was beneficial. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled said the GOK was committed, but the process would be long because of the need to work with Parliament on amending laws. The Ambassador also sought GOK financial support for humanitarian assistance in Africa. End Summary.

Counterterrorism: Stay Focused

[2](#). (C) The Ambassador opened his June 12 meeting with President of the National Security Bureau (NSB) Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah by reminding him that the Global War on Terror is a long-term effort that requires a sustained approach. He congratulated the GOK on its persistence in locating terror cells and said the severe penalties recently meted out to jihadis sent a strong message. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled noted stronger treatment against suspected terrorists, including not granting bail to some, and said that counterterrorism work was challenging and the GOK had made it a priority to win the hearts and minds of Kuwaiti youth. He reported that the inter-ministry CT committee, chaired by the Minister of Awqaf and composed of representatives from the ministries of education, social affairs and labor, interior, and foreign affairs had developed a three-year CT plan which the NSB was currently reviewing. The plan reportedly includes strategies for providing more oversight to the thousands of Kuwaiti mosques through educating and training imams and other mosque leaders to resist extremist views. He offered to share main elements of the plan with the Ambassador upon completion of the NSB review. The Ambassador welcomed the regular sharing of information and also asked for an update on efforts to locate and arrest terror financier Mohsen Al-Fadhli, noting Al-Fadhli's apparent continuing activities. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled reported that Al-Fadhli had been charged in absentia and singling out the June 7 decision to uphold the sentence of extremist cleric Shaykh Hamad Abdullah Al-Ali (ref a), said the GOK was serious about taking action against those who promote violence.

Engage with Iraqis

13. (C) Turning to Iraq, Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled echoed Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, commenting that the June 8 visit of Iraqi MFA Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs Hamad Al-Bayati was successful (ref e). The Shaykh reiterated GOK support for the U.S.-EU International Conference on Iraq and said the gathering would send a strong signal of international support for the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG). He added that the GOK was open to discussing all topics with the ITG and other partners. The Ambassador again urged Kuwaiti officials to meet with or regularly talk to their Iraqi counterparts and suggested the GOK not wait until the Brussels conference to offer further assistance to the ITG. He restated the need for the immediate transfer of Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) assets to the ITG and encouraged the GOK to initiate bilateral discussions on debt relief. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled responded that he expected a decision on the DFI "any time now" and said the GOK was waiting for an ITG request to begin talks on debt relief which would be guided by the Paris Club decisions.

#### Visitors from Iran -----

14. (C) The Ambassador and Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled also discussed GOK relations with Iran. The Shaykh informed the Ambassador that any time PM Shaykh Sabah was ready to depart for a trip to the U.S. -- the PM will travel in late June -- the Iranians sent a high-level visitor to Kuwait to clarify Iran's views. Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Dr. Hassan Rouhani, visited Kuwait June 4-6 for a series of meetings on regional security and GOK-GOI relations (ref d). Rouhani reported GOI readiness to resolve the bilateral continental shelf demarcation issue, but Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled expressed skepticism, telling the Ambassador that the matter had been unsolved for 40 years and the GOK has been ready to address it since the January 2003 visit of the PM to Tehran and doubted Iran's newfound political will. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled said Rouhani assured the GOK that Iran's nuclear facilities were fully secure and said the U.S. and Kuwait should not have any concerns. Rouhani blamed the Russians and the Germans for selecting the site of the Bushehr power plant. The Shaykh said the GOK encouraged full cooperation with the IAEA and active engagement with the EU-3, stressing that international cooperation promoted confidence in Iran. Further commenting on security, Rouhani told the Kuwaitis that when Iraq was ready, paragraph 8 of UN Security Council Resolution 598 on the situation between Iran and Iraq "and other states" would provide a good umbrella for cooperation. Rouhani further emphasized the GOI's security focus by reporting the arrest of 500 members of Al-Qaeda and 40 members of Ansar Al-Islam, noting Iran had captured more Al-Qaeda members than the U.S.

15. (C) Turning to Iranian elections, Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled said Rafsanjani would likely be elected. Kuwait had good relations with him and hoped his returned presence would reduce regional tensions. He hoped that Rafsanjani's comments on the U.S. and the region were not merely campaign slogans. Should Rafsanjani win, Rouhani would continue to be a major player. As Secretary General, the "major issues are in his hand" and he is a member of Rafsanjani's inner circle.

#### GCC Blues -----

16. (C) On relations with GCC partners, Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled informed the Ambassador that Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jabir Al-Sabah raised at the May GCC meeting the "family feud" festering among member states. Since he identified the problem, he was asked to deal with it, thus the Foreign Minister's June 5-6 visits to Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE, and the PM's June 11 trip to Saudi Arabia (ref c). Kuwait does not want relations among the Gulf states to be "like those of our friends in North Africa," with no Maghreb summit in years. Thus Kuwait was promoting greater cooperation on small, strategic issues like the Kuwait-Qatar gas pipeline. PM Shaykh Sabah would encourage the Saudis to facilitate and not block the pipeline or the UAE-Qatar bridge so that the GCC could present itself at the June G-77 summit in Doha as a cohesive, supportive regional bloc.

#### Useful FTA Seminar -----

17. (C) The Ambassador lauded the June 4 Kuwaiti-sponsored seminar on free trade agreements and said the participation of representatives of Jordan and Singapore sparked a useful dialogue on the technical challenges in negotiating and ultimate benefits of concluding such agreements (ref f). Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled commented that Commerce and Industry Minister Abdullah Abdelrahman Al-Taweel was serious about concluding a trade agreement with the U.S. and was pursuing

the necessary legal course. He continued that other GOK leadership was "well informed, involved, and actively engaged on how to move forward," but said the process would take time because Kuwait, unlike other Arab countries, had a Parliament and could not simply change laws at will. Declaring, "Trade is part of Kuwaiti culture," he was confident the FTA would be reached.

More Aid for Africa  
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18. (U) The Ambassador also used the meeting as opportunity to raise ref b demarche on humanitarian assistance for Africa. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled agreed on the need to "help our friends in Africa" and asked whether a special fund would be established at the UN for the collection of funds, noting that the GOK tends to respond positively to UN emergency appeals. He said he would also welcome additional information on the role of the G8 with regard to this U.S.-UK joint initiative.

19. (U) Baghdad: Minimize considered.

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